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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, a Senator from the State of Maryland.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, whose loving hand has sustained our Nation, help us to find our refuge in a personal commitment to Your plan for our lives. Give us the wisdom to trust You to guide our steps and to lead us to a desired destination.

Bless our lawmakers. Let the contagion of Your presence bind them together. Speak to them above the noise and prattle of impulsive rhetoric so that they will know and do Your will. Lift them above the valley and the mists of struggle to the mountain of trust and confidence in Your power. Give them the courage to seek first Your rule and righteousness.

We pray in Your sacred Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,

Washington, DC, February 7, 2007.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN,

a Senator from the State of Maryland, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. CARDIN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the Senate will begin morning business in just a few minutes, with the time until 2 p.m. equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees. The first 30 minutes this morning will be controlled by the minority, and then the majority will control, of course, the next 30 minutes. We are going to do the best we can to alternate back and forth.

Yesterday, we had a nice debate. When a Democrat wasn't here, a Republican moved in and vice versa. It worked out well with the time.

I announced last night that I intended to have the Senate proceed this afternoon to executive session to consider a number of Executive Calendar nominations. I had spoken to the Republican leader prior to making that announcement and told him I wanted to consider GEN George Casey and ADM William Fallon to be voted on today or tomorrow. I expect there will be debate with respect to the Casey nomination. We have had word that on the minority side there are a number of statements they wish to have made, and I am confident there will be some over here, also. We will make a decision at a later time whether we should have time agreements or just move forward with these.

Let me just say a few words about what is going on in the Senate and has

been going on over the last few days. As we all know, the President, in giving a speech, said he wanted to move a significant number more of American troops to Iraq. As a result of that, there have been efforts made to have the Senate vote on whether that is appropriate. We have been unable to arrive at that point, which is somewhat surprising because the people who helped write the amendment voted against proceeding to debate on that amendment. People whose names are associated with that amendment decided not to proceed to vote on that amendment.

I think it speaks volumes that there has been almost nothing said by the minority about supporting the surge. There have been no speeches over here supporting the surge. In fact, late yesterday there was a proposal to not even have a vote on supporting the surge.

That is where we are. The House is going to take up this matter next week. They will send this over to us, and in due time we will try to get to this matter. But it is pretty clear that one reason for the slowdown here is to allow the President to move troops over there. The more troops moved over there prior to this vote, the more difficult it is to say don't send the troops—when he has already sent them. But there are other ways to approach this issue in Iraq.

Just a matter of hours ago, a Sea Knight helicopter was shot down over Baghdad, the fifth helicopter shot down in the last 2 weeks. We don't know how many Americans are dead in this latest incident. We do not know because the military has not announced it. We do know these Sea Knight helicopters—they are called CH-46s—are used by the Marines primarily as a cargo and troop transport, and they carry as many as 25 combat-loaded troops.

We also know that the administration submitted its budget, requesting another \$245 billion in the war in Iraq and other matters relating to the military, bringing the total to well over

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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